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ABSTRACT

Articles in this journal issue focus on reading acquisition and instruction. The titles and authors are as follows: (1) "10 Good Ways to Involve Parents in the Reading Program," by Nickolas Criscuolo; (2) "A Parent Guide for Helping the Child with A Reading Disability," by Frederick Duffelmeyer and Dale Baum; (3) "Promoting a Good Attitude toward Reading," by Leslie Anne Perry; (4) "Basic Skills: 'We Cannot Return If We Haven't Left,'" by Ann Shea Bayer; (5) "Writing as a Language Education Issue: How Should It Be Taught and What Should Be Emphasized," by Susanne Nicholai and Jeanne Ehlinger; (6) "Report: Wisconsin Secondary Reading Programs," by the Secondary Committee of Wisconsin State Reading Association; (7) "Articles Too Good to Miss: An Annotated Guide of Readership Choice," by Jerome Harste, Karin Dahl, and Diane Stephens; (8) "Metacomprehension," by Sally Standiford; and (9) "Which Study Techniques Are Most Effective in Promoting Retention of Information?" by Russ Burgett. (HTH)

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Front Cover Artwork and Photography by Dee Walter
Wayland Academy, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin

FROM THE PRESIDENT | **Judith R. Casey**

As president of WSRA for 1985-1986, I am looking forward to an active year that will be full of professional growth opportunities for reading professionals! These opportunities include, first and foremost, the Great Lakes Regional Reading Conference to be held at MECCA in Milwaukee on October 17-19, 1985. Do plan to take part in this Conference that features outstanding speakers and a variety of workshops, sessions, and small group meetings. I will look forward to seeing you at Great Lakes!

Other ways that WSRA is supporting teachers, specialists, and administrators this year are: three workshops for reading specialists in July and August to aid in the use of the Curriculum Guide in Reading; drive-in conferences in several locations throughout the year; and support for professional conferences sponsored by the Wisconsin Education Association Council (October 24) and Wisconsin Council Teachers of English (March 6-7). These opportunities for professional development will provide all of us with up-dated knowledge of reading programs, encouragement and renewed energy. Do take advantage of them as you can.

WSRA holds professional growth and inservice of its members and other professional educators as a high priority. I am excited to be president during this year when important challenges and opportunities exist for all of us in strengthening reading education in our state.

I do look forward to seeing you at WSRA's conferences and meetings this year!

WSRA

FROM THE EDITOR ▮ Michael P. French

Current Issues in Reading is the theme of this Journal. And when we first decided on this theme, we really didn't know exactly what types of articles would be included. However, by just looking at the titles of the articles contained in this issue, one can get a pretty good idea about what the current issues in reading are.

First, the role of parents in the reading process has been and continues to be an important issue. Two articles in this journal speak to this fact. Criscuolo writes on parent involvement in the program and Duffelmeyer and Baum write on the role the parent can play in the instructional process.

Another important aspect of reading today is promoting good attitudes toward reading instruction. With regard to this issue, see the Perry article. The Bayer article (the first ever article from Hawaii, I might add) speaks to the issue of basic skills and curriculum.

Much has been written lately on the relationship of reading and writing. In this regard, we welcome, once again, an article by Erlinger and Nickolai, from Indiana University at Bloomington. And, speaking of Indiana, WSRA is fortunate to be able to include a review of Journal of Reading articles by Harste, et. al. This article will be an important resource for all those interested in reading at the secondary level.

Also included in this issue is the summary report of the Secondary Reading Committee of WSRA. This, too, is an important resource for our readers.

All in all, I think that the reader will find this last issue of Volume 29 to be varied yet stimulating in content. As always, we hope that you enjoy our efforts, and on behalf of the Editorial Staff of the WSRA Journal, we welcome you to this summer issue of the WSRA Journal.

FROM THE STATE COORDINATOR | Doug Vance

If you are a member of the International Reading Association, you received the June/July issue of *Reading Today,* which announced the awards for membership growth in IRA for 1984-85. Wisconsin received the President's Award for meeting our IRA membership goal. Two Wisconsin reading councils, Central Wisconsin and Rock River, attained Honor Council status this year. This year awards were also given to states for service and membership achievement. It is my objective to attain significant gains in IRA memberships this year and receive the recognition that Wisconsin deserves. In addition, I plan to work with councils to help them achieve IRA Honor Council awards.

This goal is important to me because I feel that everyone in the reading *profession* should belong to the professional organizations which serve them: IRA, WSRA, and their local council. Can you imagine a lawyer who did not belong to the ABA? Would you want to be treated by a doctor who did not belong to the AMA? Yet there are many in our profession who choose not to belong to the IRA.

What are the advantages of IRA membership? A basic membership will bring a subscription to *Reading Today,* with news of what is going on in the field of reading, including regular columns on legislation, news for parents, administrators, elementary and secondary teachers. Journal membership includes *The Reading Teacher* for elementary teachers, *The Journal of Reading* for secondary teachers, *or Reading Research Quarterly.*

Most important, membership helps to support the activities of the International Reading Association, which organizes major conferences (Your membership will bring lower rates to the Great Lakes Regional Conference in Milwaukee.), legislative efforts, and committee work which helps to advance the reading profession.

If you are not a member of IRA, get out your checkbook, and send $18.00 for a basic membership or $30.00 for a journal membership to: IRA, 800 Barksdale Road, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, and join the professionals.

10 GOOD WAYS TO INVOLVE PARENTS IN THE READING PROGRAM

Nickolas Criscuolo, Ph.D.
New Haven Public Schools
New Haven, Connecticut

A renewed thrust has emerged concerning reading instruction in today's schools. This is the recognition of the importance of the role parents play in reinforcing reading skills. Such events as legislation, the Chapter I program, and tight school budgets have buttressed the need for parents to become involved.

A viable way to stimulate parent involvement is to show them ways they can reinforce reading skills in the home environment. Many times parents will ask classroom and reading teachers what they can do at home to support the school's reading program. The remainder of this article will describe briefly ten good ways to involve parents in the reading program.

1. Parents can paste a picture of a car on a paper bag printing the first letter of the word on the bag. Magazines and newspapers can be supplied and the child asked to find all the pictures that start like "car," cut them out and paste them on the bag. This activity, of course, reinforces knowledge of initial consonant sounds.
2. Parents can ask their children to read the sports page in the newspaper to locate major league teams for baseball and football. Beside the name of each team, children can be asked to write the city and state which is the "home" of that team and to locate and circle each city and state on the map.
3. Two popular advice columns are *Ann Landers* and *Dear Abby*. Using these as examples, parents can ask their youngsters to write to world leaders asking their advice on world events.
4. Parents can encourage their children to organize a neighborhood talent show, emphasizing the literary aspects of this type of entertainment. Children can select story characters from books they have read for skits and pantomimes. They can then make posters advertising the show, and, if possible, have a program printed which lists in order the acts that will be performing at the talent show.
5. Parents can ask their children to make a list of different countries mentioned on the first two pages of the newspaper, select one of the countries they might like to live in, and write an ad for a tour of that country.
6. After children have read a book, parents can ask their children to select one object that is mentioned in the book. Parents can then encourage their children to write the direc-

tions for making it. For example, a mask, a puppet, an airplane model, could be selected and then made by following the written directions.

7. Parents can ask their children to print or write words that they can recognize in isolation. As the number of words accumulates, a shoebox for a "Word Box" can be used. These words can then be alphabetized, put into various categories, and used to write creative, original stories.
8. Parents can ask their children to make a list of the activities they have planned for the day. These activities should be listed in sequence. Parents can then ask their children to draw a picture of each one of these activities.
9. Parents can ask their children to read the *TV Guide* and to select five unfamiliar words to look up in the dictionary. Children can also be asked to write five sentences about a favorite TV program.
10. Parents can ask their children to make a bookmark with a picture depicting the main idea of a book they have read and to use it for a book they are now reading. These bookmarks make attractive and inexpensive gifts for relatives and friends.

Concluding Remarks

These activities are designed to foster parent involvement in the reading instruction process. They can be discussed and distributed at parent meetings and conferences or sent home. They are easy to use and will help reinforce important reading/language arts skills.

PARENTS AS READING PARTNERS
"WE WORK BETTER WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER"

READING BEGINS AT HOME

A PARENT GUIDE FOR HELPING THE CHILD WITH A READING DISABILITY

Frederick A. Duffelmeyer
Dale D. Baum
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

If your child is experiencing difficulty with reading, it is very important that he begin to experience success. Ideally, your child's teacher will recognize the problem and make the necessary instructional adjustments to help bring this about. Realistically, that might not happen, at least not to a satisfactory degree. Classroom teachers are frequently not able to spend as much time as they would like looking after individual needs. Does this mean that your child is bound to fall further and further behind in reading?

Not necessarily, because you, his parents, can help to provide the success he badly needs. This article describes an instructional procedure that you can carry out at home which should provide your child with successful reading experiences. The procedure is based on one that has been used successfully with children who have had difficulty with reading.

Getting Started

The starting point for this procedure is to have your child read aloud from a book that is comparable in difficulty to his reading book at school. The teacher could be asked to suggest books which you could borrow from the school library or the public library. During your trip to the library, it would be useful to have your child select an easy reading book that he wants to read, also. As he reads from the "comparable in difficulty" book, have a pad and pencil handy for writing down any words he mispronounces or fails to recognize. When six errors have been made, tactfully intervene and read to him from the same book for three to five minutes. A sample text from which six errors were generated is shown below. The six words that caused difficulty are in italics.

> Jim and Pat go to school. But their school is not like most schools. Most schools have *many* rooms. Their school has just one room. Most schools have many boys and girls. *Their* school has just ten *children*.
>
> The school is *near* a farm. Jim and Pat's teacher is Mrs. Brown. Mrs. Brown rides a bike to school. It is red and white. She *parks* it outside. Sometimes it gets wet from the *rain*.

The six words your child had trouble with are called "target" words. In preparation for teaching them, you will need to do the following:

1. Print each target word on a 3 x 5 index card. Number the cards from one to six. A sample deck containing the six words in italics above is shown in Figure 1.

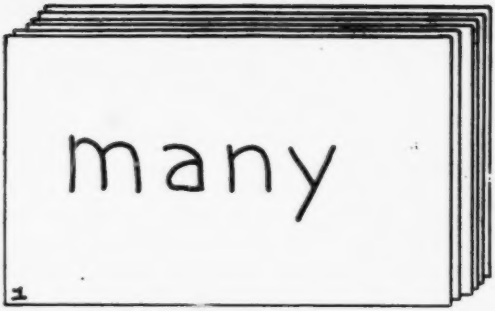

Figure 1

2. Divide six unlined sheets of 8½ x 11 paper into four equal-size sections. Number the sheets from one to six.
3. Print target word #1 on sheet #1 in any of the four sections. In the remaining three sections print words that are similar in form to the target word. A sample sheet for the target word "many" is shown in Figure 2.

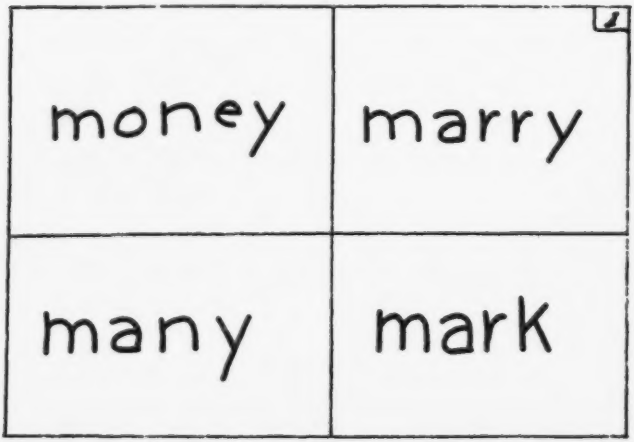

Figure 2

4. Repeat step #3 for the remaining five target words. Vary the location of the target words from one sheet to the next.
5. Make up a simple sentence for each target word. Print the sentences on a lined sheet of 8½ x 11 paper. A set of simple sentences for the target words mentioned above is shown in Figure 3.

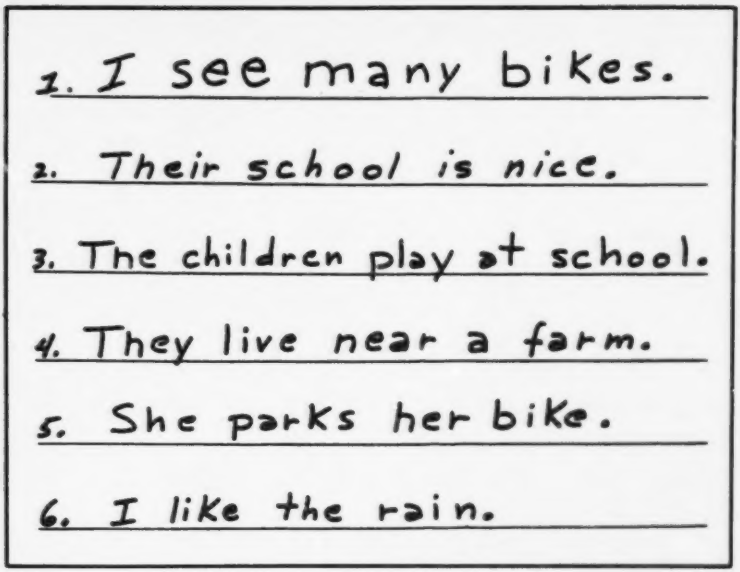
1. I see many bikes.
2. Their school is nice.
3. The children play at school.
4. They live near a farm.
5. She parks her bike.
6. I like the rain.

Figure 3

Teaching

Once these materials have been developed, you are ready to teach the target words. The following activities are designed for that purpose:

1. *Look-Match.* Place the word cards and word sheets in front of your child. The words and sheets should be in the same order. Then say: "Pick up the card on top of the deck. Look at it carefully. Then place it next to the same word on this word sheet." If your child matches the word card to its partner on the sheet, remove the card sheet and say: "Good. Now do the same thing with the next card in the deck." If he does not make the correct match, place the card where it belongs and say: "These two are the same," before having him proceed. Continue in this manner until the deck of cards is completed.

   The Look-Match task is relatively easy; therefore, your child is very likely to be successful. This, together with the fact that the target words have been brought to his attention, will increase the chance of success on subsequent, more demanding tasks.

2. *Listen-Find.* Place the word sheets only in front of your child, but in a different order. Then say: "I am going to say a word. Listen carefully as I say it. After I say the word,

point to it on the word sheet in front of you." If your child points to the word you say, respond by saying: "Good. Now listen carefully to the next word and find it." If he points to a word other than the target word, point to the target word and say: "This is the word_____." Continue in this manner until the stack of word sheets is completed.

The Listen-Find task is slightly more difficult than Look-Match, but the chance of being successful is still high. Your child hasn't yet been asked to look at the target words AND PRONOUNCE THEM. However, the Listen-Find activity features an auditory-visual (hearing-seeing) association that is basic to being able to pronounce a word at sight.

At no time during either the Look-Match or Listen-Find activities does your child receive any negative feedback. Errors are dealt with in a positive, non-demeaning way. You will see this happen with the remaining activities too. Being positive, as well as carefully sequencing activities, is an important part of building success.

3. *Look-Print.* Show your child any one of the target words. Then say: "This word is_____. Look at it until you think you can print it from memory." When he signals that he is ready, remove the card from his view. If he prints the word correctly, say: "Good. Now let's do the same thing with another word." If he does not print the target word correctly, display it again and have him copy it. Then say: "Good," and go on to the next word. Continue in this manner with the remaining target words.

4. *Sentences.* Place the sheet of sentences you wrote (example in Figure 3) in front of your child. Then say: "Here are some sentences for you to read. Read the first one out loud." If he reads the sentence correctly the first time through, say: "Good. Now read the next sentence." If he does not read the sentence correctly the first time through, pronounce any missed words. Then say: "Try that sentence again." Do not proceed to the next sentence until the original one is read free of errors.

5. *Find-Read.* For this activity you will need the book that your child read from when the six target words were identified. Open the book to the page where the first error was made. Show him the card for that word and say: "Find this word in the story. Then read the sentence that it is in out loud." As he reads, provide help if it is needed. After he has read the sentence, and if he correctly pronounced the target word, point to the word and say: "You did a good job on this word. Now let's do the same thing with another word." If he did not pronounce the target word correctly, point to

it and say: "This word is _____," and go on to the target word that occurs next in the story. Continue in this manner for the remaining target words.

Summing Up

By the time the Read-Find activity has been completed, your child will have been required to work with each of the target words in five ways. The combined effect of these activities should be a solid learning of the six target words. The chances are also quite good that he will have begun to experience what it feels like to be successful in reading.

The amount of time it takes to proceed through a set of six words will vary from one setting to another. Do not feel compelled to get it done in any predetermined number of sessions. Allow your child's response to the various tasks and your respective schedules to dictate the pace and duration of instruction.

Regardless of how many sessions it takes to proceed through a set of words, conclude each session with your child's reading a brief story (say 50 words) in easy reading material, followed by your reading a three to five minute story. Parents who plan the time to read with their child provide excellent models for reading. This reinforces the notion that reading is an enjoyable as well as a meaningful activity.

Once your child has completed a set of words, repeat the entire procedure. How many word sets should you do? There is no fixed number. As a general rule, work with your child until there are signs that the success he is having at home spills over into the classroom -- signs such as reading better aloud, attempting to pronounce unknown words, and being more attentive during reading. Keep your child's teacher informed as to what you and he are doing, and periodically check to see how he is doing at school. By keeping in touch with the teacher, the transfer of success from home to school should be quicker and more permanent.

Reading is crucial to academic success. Therefore, it is certainly understandable for the parents of a child who is having difficulty in learning to read to become concerned. Likewise, it is also natural for the parents to want to help their child overcome this difficulty. This article has described one way in which you can help your child at home. Through it all, remember to be patient and understanding. The world is full of individual differences that can be accommodated without being demeaned. By planning activities in which your child can succeed, by praising him when he succeeds, and by providing support and encouragement when he does not, you can help your child achieve success in reading.

Plan To Attend
6th
GREAT LAKES REGIONAL READING CONFERENCE
MECCA Milwaukee, Wisconsin

October 17-19, 1985
Theme — Read: All About It

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WORKSHOPS

1. The Basal Reader
2. Content Area Reading
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5. Gifted and Talented
6. Special Needs
7. College Survival Skills
8. Parents and Reading
9. Newspapers and Education
10. Technology and Computers
11. Writing and Reading
12. The Emergent Reader

PROMOTING A GOOD ATTITUDE TOWARD READING

Leslie Anne Perry, Ph.D.
Jasper, Alabama

As most children can tell you, one of the members of television's *A-Team* is B.A. Baracus. They can also tell you that the initials B.A. stand for *Bad Attitude.* I have found, however, that B.A. can be used to promote a *Good Attitude* toward reading when I feature him in short, easy-to-read stories.

My students thoroughly enjoy the stories I write about any of their favorite television characters, but B.A. is definitely near the top of their list. Also, since I use words introduced in our basal reader, the students have no difficulty reading these stories. (Success also fosters a *Good Attitude* toward reading.)

The following story, *B.A. and the Lion,* is one that teachers can reproduce for their own students to read and enjoy. The story contains words introduced through the primer level of a major reading series. The activity that follows the story can be used to extend the students' word attack skills.

B.A. and the Lion

B.A. was sitting at his house looking at T.V. There were many good things on T.V. that day and he wanted to see them all.

After a time, the phone rang. A man at the zoo had called B.A. He said, "B.A., I need your help. The big yellow lion has gotten out. He is running all over. Can you help me get him back in?"

B.A. said that he could help the zoo man. So he got in his van and went to the zoo.

"Are any more animals out?" asked B.A. "No," said the zoo man. "The lion got out, but no more animals got out. They are all in their houses."

B.A. saw the lion. He was getting something to drink by the bird house. The birds were flying this way and that.

Then the lion went under a table looking for something to eat. All the people went away from the table. They gave him what they had to eat. The lion liked the things they gave him.

Then the lion washed his hands and feet. He had gotten things on them when he was eating.

"I wish that the lion would take a nap," said the zoo man. "Then we could get him and put him back in the lion house."

The lion did take a nap. He got up on the table and found a good spot to put his head. Then he went to sleep.

"The lion is asleep now," said B.A. "But how do we get him

back in the lion house?"

The zoo man said, "You have to pick him up and take him back to his house." "No way!" said B.A. "I'll have to call Hannibal and see if he can come up with a plan."

So B.A. called Hannibal and asked him to come help get the lion back to the lion house. Hannibal, Face, and Murdock got to the zoo very fast.

Soon Hannibal came up with a good plan. He said that Murdock could sing to the lion. Then all four of them would pull the table all the way to the lion house. They did not want to wake up the lion as they walked.

So they all pulled and pulled the table with the big lion on it. At last, they got to the lion house and pulled the table in. Then they ran out and shut the door!

B.A. was so happy to have the lion back in the lion house. He thanked his friends for coming to help him.

The zoo man thanked them all for helping. He said that he would not let any animals get out again.

Then the A-Team went to get something to eat. After they ate, they went to B.A.'s house to look at his T.V. The *A-Team* was on T.V.!

Reading Activity

Word Attack: Structural Analysis - adding the "ing" ending

After the students have read and discussed the story, have them circle all the words in the first seven paragraphs to which an "ing" has been added:

1st paragraph: sitting, looking
2nd paragraph: running
5th paragraph: getting, flying
6th paragraph: looking
7th paragraph: eating

Write the words on the chalkboard after the students have located them in the story. Then ask the students if they can tell you what is different about the words "sitting," "running," and "getting." (The final consonant was doubled before the "ing" was added.)

Guide the students to generalize that, in words ending in a single consonant that is preceded by a single vowel, the final consonant is doubled before the ending is added.

In Summary

By using stories based on popular television characters such as *BA and the Lion,* teachers can give their students and themselves a break from basal reader selections.

BASIC SKILLS: "WE CANNOT RETURN IF WE HAVEN'T LEFT"

Ann Shea Bayer, Ph.D.
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Literacy instruction in our public schools is being challenged by parents, institutions, and the media. The most typical solution suggested as a response to this challenge is a call for a "return to the basics." The "basics" refer to the skills of spelling, punctuation, grammar, and phonics in isolation. The emphasis in instruction is on knowledge about these language forms. Evaluation is based on "accurateness" and "correctness."

Three fallacies in this solution are as follows:(1) It is based on the view of literacy instruction which originated when our national expectations for literacy were lower. (2) It confuses the attainment of literacy with the attainment of knowledge about the forms of Standard English. (3) It is based on the belief that "basic skills" have been abandoned in our schools.

To begin with, Resnick and Resnick (1977) argue that these "old tried and true approaches" that "back to basic" proponents support were not designed to achieve the higher standards of literacy expected today for the majority of our population. Rather, these approaches more closely match the earlier definitions of literacy which included the ability to write one's name and the ability to read aloud fluently. It has only been during the last three generations that criteria for literacy have included the notion that the entire population should be able to read unfamiliar material for the purpose of acquiring new and usable information. More recently, this definition is being expanded to include the ability to use writing to convey messages. As these standards change, so do expectations. Higher expectations, for a larger part of our population, contribute to the present-day notion of a "literacy crisis," and call for new instructional practices which are likely to promote new levels of language development.

How these "old tried and true approaches" evolved in the first place leads us to the second fallacy -- the confusion between the attainment of literacy for the 1980's (e.g., the ability to use language) and the attainment of knowledge of the forms of Standard English.

According to Heath (1979; 1980), viewing one variety of the English language as the only acceptable standard began around the middle of the nineteenth century. Prior to that time it was not uncommon for grammarians to stress the *uses* of language and consider language variations as inevitable. The use of Standard English was promoted as a tool which could be used by individuals as a resource.

After 1850, however, when diverse immigrant groups began at-

tending public schools, educators and national leaders began to support cultural and linquistic uniformity as a way of coping. The linguistic uniformity led to the selection of one variety of English as being superior to all other varieties. Soon, this "right," "proper," and "correct" grammar (Standard English) became associated with all things moral and American, and Standard English became a symbol rather than a tool.

This view of Standard English, the symbol, rather than Standard English, the tool, was translated into a literacy curriculum which emphasized the forms of Standard English. "Good grammar" was taught through rote memorization and diagramming; "correct" oral readings dominated reading instruction. These views have been passed on through generations of teacher training programs, and they remain with us today.

Evidence that these views still exist can be found in the discussion of the third fallacy -- the belief that basic skills have been abandoned in our elementary schools. On the contrary, Robinson (1977) found that almost all of the approaches used in the United States since 1840 were visible during the 1970's. The skills stressed in present-day language arts and reading programs are handwriting, punctuation, spelling, knowledge of standard English grammar, "correct" oral reading, and phonics instruction (Cazden and Dickinson, 1981; Heath, 1980; Shuy, 1981).

Indeed, the 1977 findings of an independent review committee of a Massachusetts school system indicated that 'basic skills' pervaded the language arts curriculum from the "first grade to the last" (Cazden and Dickinson, 1981).

Further evidence can be found in the content of school districts' literacy-related curriculum guides. These curriculum guides are also referred to as Scope and Sequence Charts or K-6 (K-12) language arts and reading continuums. Though few public schools in the United States have *explicit* literacy policies, these curriculum guidelines reflect, albeit implicitly, the literacy policies to which teachers and administrators adhere.

During the fall of 1981, twenty language arts and reading continuums, published between 1971-1979, were randomly selected from the San Mateo County Educational Resource Center collection, and examined. They represent school districts which reflect the urban-rural, wealthy-poor, ethnic-other, liberal-conservative continuums that are found nationwide. The diversity stops there. The uniformity of the content is striking. The components that make up the content of these curriculum guides, both in reading and in language arts, reflect "basic skills" literacy instruction, as illustrated in the following examples:

(#1) T = Teach
C = Competency
M = Maintain

Reading

The student will be able to:	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
SOUND-SYMBOL RELATIONSHIP							
4. Identify initial and final consonants auditorily and visually	T	C	M				
5. Identify short vowels auditorily and visually	T	C	M				
6. Identify consonant digraphs auditorily and visually	T	C	M				

(Santa Barbara School District, 1979)

(#2) I = Introduce
T = Teach
R = Reinforce
M = Master

Language Arts

COMMUNICATION SKILLS	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Writing								
grammar								
the sentence								
recognition	I	T	R	M	→			
complete	I	T	R	M	→			
simple	I	T	R	M	→			
compound				I	T	R	M	→
complex							I	T
fragment								→

(Fremont Unified School District, 1974)

(#3) • = Introduce

Language Arts

PUNCTUATION:	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Study
Periods										
. at the end of a sentence		•	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
. after initials and abbreviations				•	—	—	—	—	—	—
Commas										
. in writing dates				•	—	—	—	—	—	—
. greetings and closings of letters				•	—	—	—	—	—	—

(San Carlos School District, 1974)

(#4)

Language Arts

GRAMMAR SKILLS

The learner will be able to...

1. *Correctly apply* the following:
   a. Capitalization (1st)
   b. Periods (1st)
   c. Commas (1st)
   d. Question Marks (1st)
   e. Quotation Marks (2nd)
   f. Colons (2nd)
   g. Apostrophes (2nd)
   h. Semi-colons (2nd)
   i. Hyphens (4th)

1. Given a story printed on the chalkboard, the student will identify words needing capitalization. (a)

   Given a set of simple sentences that do not have any capitalization or punctuation, the learner will demonstrate ability to use correctly, capital letters, periods, commas, and question marks by re-writing each sentence using appropriate punctuation. (b) (d)

(Fort Bragg Unified School District, 1975)

Even given this small sample, and the recognition that not all teachers will follow the guides exclusively, such uniformity in the curriculum guides of our most populous state is further evidence of the pervasiveness of this approach in our elementary schools today, and a clear sign that "basic skills" have not been abandoned. We cannot return if we haven't left; perhaps we need to go forward toward new instructional practices which are more likely to promote the higher levels of literacy needed in the 1980's.

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WRITING AS A LANGUAGE EDUCATION ISSUE: HOW SHOULD IT BE TAUGHT AND WHAT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED?

Susanne Nicholai
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The reports on excellence in education along with reports on the illiteracy of high school graduates have caused society to scrutinize what is being taught in public schools and how it is being taught. Basic skill areas of reading, writing, and computation have received the most focused attention. Writing, as one of these basic skill areas, is a complex, varied process that schools are charged to teach. Language arts, which embodies the skills of speech, reading, literature and writing, remains a core subject in schools. How schools can best prepare students to handle the writing demands of the school world as well as the writing demands of their future non-school world has become a debatable issue that classroom teachers and reading specialists at all levels need to address. Issues contain two or more positions, and this one is no different. The question is, "Should schools follow traditional models for writing instruction, or should they use non-traditional models that involve practical writing for special purposes?"

Position I
Schools should use traditional models for writing instruction

Writing is an important skill that must be taught so that students leave school being able to perform it. Workplace demands for writing are high as indicated by Mikulecki (1982) in a study of 150 selected workers in which 89% of the workers reported that they regularly wrote things such as forms, orders, correspondence and reports while on the job. Unfortunately, American public schools have performed poorly in the teaching of writing to the point where some critics consider it a "writing crisis" (Wheeler, 1979). A 1981 National Assessment of Educational Progress found that there has been no overall improvement in student writing during the last ten years and that the use of rhetorical skills in persuasive writing has declined sharply. Why this lack of progress in learning writing skills? Most studies say that students get little direct instruction in writing and are seldom assigned writing tasks (Applebee, 1981; Wolf and Greenwald, 1980). As a result, enjoyment of writing seems to decline as students grow older.

This concern over the decline in writing skills has focused attention on models for writing instruction. Traditional models based on product-oriented theories have gained renewed support from educators because they place an emphasis on:

1. proficiency and direct instruction,
2. basic skills aquisition, and
3. the value of a liberal arts education.

Emphasis on Proficiency and Direct Instruction

There are several different theories of writing that have been used to look at writing in schools. The ones most commonly used by schools are product theories. Product theories are traditional models for writing that are slightly different but have similar components (Shanklin, 1981, p. 50-52).

1. Emphasis is placed on the production and analysis of the written product.
2. The goal is to develop good writers for school purposes. Using correct form is emphasized. The assumption is made that academic writing skills will transfer to other types of writing situations such as the workplace.
3. Writing is viewed as a series of steps. For example, in the planning stage, one needs to: a) gather ideas, b) develop thesis statements, and c) outline the thesis statement.
4. Emphasis is placed on paragraph development. One must master the paragraph before writing a theme, which is a series of paragraphs.
5. Emphasis is placed on planning before writing.
6. Literary readings are used as models for students' writing.

Product theories clearly explain the goal and form of the written product for school settings and, in general, these product theories emphasize proficiency in writing that produces a well-written product.

Three popular product theories used in secondary schools today are those created by Baker (1977), McCrimmon (1980), and Warriner (1979). All contain clear directions to teachers for instruction and classroom use. Both Baker, in his 4th edition of *The Practical Stylist,* and McCrimmon, in his 6th edition of *Writing With A Purpose,* view writing as a complex process that can be taught effectively to students if it is broken into stages with each stage being taught and mastered in order, one at a time. The end result is the ability to write well. The ability to write well is acquired through the mastery of a great many individual skills with textbook exercises providing the necessary practice. Through the teacher's guidance and insistence, students learn to carry over into all their writing the skills they have learned from their textbooks (Warriner, 1977, p. VII).

Emphasis on Basic Skills Acquisition

With poor ratings for students' ability to write coming out of the numerous reports on the status of education in the United States, schools are "counteracting with remedies ranging from courses in bonehead English to cash awards for outstanding essays" (Wellborn, 1981). This emphasis on basic writing skills can be attributed to a decline in writing abilities from the late 60's to early 70's, and the emphasis on competency testing of students and teachers.

Educators date the decline of writing abilities to the late 60's when many schools dropped traditional grammar and exposition for "less rigorous" English courses (Wellborn, 1981). The 1960's emphasis on creative writing and language experiences has created a "backlash" to more traditional methods (Smedley, 1983, p.3).

> For nearly two decades, formal grammar and the accurate use of language have been anathema to most teachers of English in schools. In the mid-1960's creative writing replaced grammar as the popular vehicle for teaching the use of the English language. It was as though the master carpenters had decided to dispense with the teaching of essential skills and allowed their apprentices to create what they could by imagination alone. The apprentices would have learned nothing, and the consequences for children forced to submit to this approach to teaching the craft of English, were hardly less disastrous (Rae, 1982).

Mortimer Adler is one who is concerned with the state of schools in general and would like to see radical school reform that emphasizes basic, traditional approaches to learning as opposed to the approach of the 1960's (Adler, 1983). His "Paideia Group" supports the belief that "liberalism has become ... synonymous with license, synonymous with freedom without authority or discipline, and therefore odious" (Adler, 1977, p. 47). As a result, he advocates a return to basic schooling that all should receive no matter what they intend to do later in their lives (Adler, 1983). His approach to education is not specific to writing, but it does present a plan for education that advocates the teaching of writing, along with other skills, in a basic, traditional manner as opposed to the more liberal approaches of the 60's and 70's.

Another reason that traditional models for teaching writing that emphasize basic skills acquision are popular is competency testing of students. Traditional approaches are used because teachers know that is what students will be tested on in the competency tests. With competency testing becoming a reality in more and more states, teachers naturally will spend their valuable

class time teaching writing by traditional, product theory models since that is what will be tested. As long as state legislatures believe that competency testing "will be a solution for the breakdown in language skills"(*The Waukesha Freeman,* Dec. 6, 1982), traditional writing models will be used.

Emphasis On The Value Of Liberal Arts

It is the belief among some that a liberal arts education prepares one to do nothing. This is not necessarily true. Adler maintains that development of basic skills using traditional, liberal arts approaches and content will adequately prepare one for earning a living. One reason for stating this is that basic intellectual skills are all the skills of learning. If one possesses these skills, one can easily adapt them to other situations. His other reason is that a completely general and liberal school is the most practical way to prepare for earning a living in the job market of the future (Adler, 1983, p. 34). Writing is part of the liberal arts and should be treated as such. Baker (1977) maintains that the expository problems in writing are the same for all types of writing: freshman essay; dissertation; companies' annual reports; and that the problems for all of these types of writing are the same - simply form and style. There is no need to teach writing for special purposes since "writing well is writing with style," and it should be taught as an art in which the student learns to "shape his material and bring out the grains to best advantage" no matter what the situation, school or non-school (p. vii).

The liberal arts focus to writing and education in general will prepare students to handle the writing demands of the school world as well as the demands of their future non-school world. The value of a liberal arts education remains, however, in question in today's technological society. A graduate student in a course that was discussing the value of teaching reading and writing for the special purposes of the non-school world expressed this concern in the following manner:

> We, as a nation, seem to no longer value the liberal arts education - we are worried about training for special purposes. The focus is on function, practicality. I think that our aim in the secondary school should be to make good, solid people, then to let those students go out and channel themselves into the special areas. We're getting more like the USSR if we start special training lower and lower in the grades.

Position I maintains that traditional models for writing instruction based on product-oriented theories can be used effectively by educators to prepare students for writing demands in school as well as outside of school. This belief is based upon an emphasis on proficiency and direct instruction, basic skills acquisition, and

the value of a liberal arts education. Those who support the traditional methods support the idea that the writing skills will transfer and are easily adaptable to other situations. This is a debatable belief. There is another position on writing instruction that contends that traditional approaches do not adequately prepare students nor do the writing skills transfer to other situations and that schools should use non-traditional models for writing instruction that involve practical writing for special purposes.

Position II
Schools should use non-traditional models for writing instruction that involve practical writing for special purposes

The type of writing that is taught and practiced in most schools is not the type of writing that students will encounter in the workplace. Studies of writing in American secondary schools indicate that little writing occurs, and most of it is comprised of copying, making notes, and answering short questions to demonstrate that learning has occurred. Very little writing to communicate or complete a task occurs (Mikulecky, 1982, p. 59). "Research observations of workers in hundreds of occupations indicate that the average worker may be producing more 'writing' on the job than the average student does in school" (p. 51).

Applebee (1981) in a study of writing in American schools reported that "an average of 44% of the observed lesson time involved writing activities." Of this 44%, only 3% involved writing of paragraph length or longer (p. 93). Wolf and Greenwald (1981) also found from their observation of secondary classrooms that only 5 minutes a day were spent on writing by itself (essays, dictation, lecture notes) and 30 minutes a day were spent in writing supported by reading (essay exams, translation).

These studies indicate that little writing is going on in secondary schools in contrast to the amount of writing that occurs in the workplace. Faigley, Miller, Meyer, and Witte (1981) found that college-trained people spent an average of 23% of their working time writing. Only 4 out of 200 people interviewed said they did no writing on the job. In an analysis of work-related writing demands for 150 workers, Mikulecky (1982, p. 55) reported that 89% of the workers regularly produced written reports.

This research on the writing that occurs outside of schools indicates a need for non-traditional approaches to writing that emphasize practical writing. "Practical writing is context-bound, audience-specific, short-term, precisely targeted, use-oriented and bound by economics" (Mitchell, 1982, p. 16). Practical writing for special purposes as a model for instruction has gained support from educators for the following reasons.

Workplace Writing Demands Have Increased

The rapid and continual increase and change in technology has caused a change in job requirements. More employees are required to use some form of technology on the job. Jobs are now more complex than fifteen years ago. This growth in technology has produced a demand from the non-school population for people who possess specific language skills. Even entry level jobs require language for special purposes (Mikulecky, 1984). Schools cannot ignore the world outside the confines of the school walls. They need to teach their students in such a way as to prepare them to handle the demands of the world in which they must function. Jobs today require specific types of writing skills, and schools need to teach so that these skills transfer to non-school situations.

Basic Writing Skills Do Not Always Transfer To Workplace Writing

Schools that support traditional models for instruction assume that skills will transfer to non-school situations. There is a growing body of research that suggests that this is not the case. Scribner and Cole (1978) suggest that "the effects of literacy and perhaps schooling as well are restricted ... or generalized only to closely related practice" (p. 457). Sticht (1980) in research with the military reported that "job reading gains were much larger than general reading. This indicates that people are learning what they are taught" (p. 303). This research does not specifically deal with the transfer of writing skills, but it does raise legitimate questions as to whether basic writing skills will automatically transfer to workplace writing tasks.

Even though the majority of job-related reading and writing is technical in nature, students are typically not taught this type of reading and writing in the secondary schools. Teaching of writing in secondary schools is almost entirely composition (Sticht, 1975, p. 184). Mitchell (1982), as an advocate of practical writing instruction, believes that learning about writing "belongs as part of everyone's preservice education. Training in practical writing should be provided at every level, from elementary school students learning to write letters, to graduate students learning to write dissertations." It need not "displace the present literature-oriented English class but rather supplement it" (pp. 32-33).

The Process of Writing is More Important Than the Product

Since workplace writing is different from school writing, a different theory might be used to analyze it. Process theories which suggest that writing is more than just following a form and set of procedures to develop an acceptable written product are more useful for analyzing workplace writing. Components of process theories that are applicable to writing for special purposes are that writing is a problem-solving activity, that writers need to an-

ticipate their audience, and that steps in the writing process need not be linear.

Writing is a problem-solving activity in which the writer has a task to accomplish, in which defining the initial problem is an "immutable part of the process" (Flower and Hayes, 1981). Planning for writing also involves anticipating the audience as well as gathering facts, organizing information and considering alternatives (Flower and Hayes, 1981). Mitchell speaks of "audience-oriented utilitarianism" in which writing for special purposes (practical writing) must meet the needs of its intended readers, but should not follow traditional models that apparently have always been used to meet those needs (pp. 24-25). The writing process also has clear steps and sub-steps. These steps can occur in different stages of the process and may repeat themselves (Flower and Hayes, 1981).

Workplace writing is different from school writing. It is not a "rule governed procedure" (Mitchell, 1982). It often intentionally violates traditional writing rules and standards since workplace writing must sometimes be informal, indirect, or confusing depending on your audience and your purpose (O'Dell, 1980).

Rather than narrowly focused writing for school purposes, proponents of writing for special purposes advocate that schools teach writing as a process so as to increase the amount of writing students do in order that they gain experience in types of writing processes that they will encounter in the workplace.

Implications For Educators

Many teachers use traditional methods for writing instruction because that is what they are familiar with and that is how they were taught. They generally do not have enough of an understanding of what writing entails to break it into teachable components of their own. Traditional textbooks such as Warriner's are readily available as guides to follow. To break from these traditional structured approaches, for even a short period, requires a great deal of time and energy from teachers. Materials must be gathered and instructional plans must be developed.

Whether one believes in a traditional or non-traditional approach toward teaching writing, one common belief can be found -students need to be given time to write. "Only the requirement to write, week by week, year by year, throughout grammar and high school will produce literate Americans. But objective tests replace the act of writing, practice books and workbooks corrupt the language, and reading tests and texts often set insipid examples of writing" (Mitchell, 1982, p. 22). Classroom teachers must reassess the emphasis in the schools and find time for more writing that challenges students.

Since research reported above indicates that more writing is taking place in the workplace than in schools, educators need to take a look at what types of writing their students may be expected to do upon graduation as well as the areas in which classroom and business writing are interrelated. To do this effectively, educators need to build bridges between schools who teach writing and the disciplines that need writing for special purposes. Building coalitions between schools and business, while redirecting the emphasis on writing in the schools, is necessary.

Teaching practical writing for special purposes does not mean eliminating the teaching of skills such as spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Most teachers would agree that students need to spell accurately, punctuate well, and write grammatically correct sentences, but they also want them to be fluent and flexible. Classroom teachers cannot be expected to prepare students completely for demands they will face in occupations, but they can do many things to increase the amount of writing their students do and provide experiences that simulate the non-school environment.

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The Wisconsin State Reading Association Journal is seeking articles that are aimed at improving the quality of reading instruction. Each issue is developed around a predetermined theme; however, articles not related to the theme but deserving publication are encouraged. Each theme is selected to be wide enough in scope to allow for many approaches and kinds of articles. The WSRA Journal especially encourages the submission of descriptions of research, poetry, practical papers, etc. Upcoming themes and deadlines for 1985-1986 are:

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Volume 30, Number 4	Theme: **Literature and Reading** Deadline: March 1, 1986

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REPORT: WISCONSIN SECONDARY READING PROGRAMS

Secondary Committee
of Wisconsin State
Reading Association
Spring, 1985

From time to time the WSRA Journal is able to reprint articles and reports from other sources which are of special interest to our readers. This report originally appeared in WSRA Focus, the Secondary Committee's Newsletter. I wish to thank the co-editors Jim Devine and Tom Altenburg for their efforts in compiling the survey data and for their permission to reprint the report.

Due to space limitations we are not able to print the entire listings of resources, programs, and schools named in the original report. Likewise, this summary does not include the various examples of reading specialist duties, job descriptions, or course names contained in the original report. The complete report may be obtained (while supplies last) by contacting Tom Altenburg in the Sun Prairie (WI) Schools.

MF

ABSTRACT

The Secondary Reading Committee of the Wisconsin State Reading Association has attempted to define the components of a comprehensive secondary reading program. This report should aid school districts to clarify and evaluate their programs, and identify needs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people responsible for the completion of this report. First, Karen Fadner, Sandy Kauer, Joan Whitman, Joe Papenfuss, Paul Majerle and Tom Altenburg met in Stevens Point in July 1983 to begin the process of defining a secondary reading program. Later Doug Vance, Doug Buehl, Loren Schroeder, Jim Devine, Ben Brewer and Doris Cook added needed insight to complete the secondary reading narrative and accompanying questionnaire. The leadership of the Wisconsin State Reading Association is thanked for their support.

Finally, appreciation should be given to over 200 reading teachers, specialists and consultants who took the time to fill out the questionnaire.

WSRA hopes this report serves as a useful tool to school districts as it relates to effective secondary programs.

Co-Editors: Tom Altenburg, Co-chairman WSRA Secondary Reading Committee-
Sun Prairie Schools
Jim Devine, Editor of *Focus* Secondary Reading Newsletter-
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Judith Wainwright - Northland Pines High School
Joe Papenfuss - Racine Unified School District
Karen Fadner - Mosinee School District
Joan Whitman - Brookfield School District
Teddie Archer - Keshena School District
Debbie Fantini - Freedom Public Schools

INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin State Reading Association's Secondary Reading Committee over the past two years (1983-1985) embarked on a study of secondary reading programs in the state of Wisconsin. The process to developing this study was as follows:

1. The committee defined what a comprehensive reading program should be at the secondary level. This definition included a philosophy statement along with accompaning goals.

   In the philosophy statement we stated that we believed that:

   - Reading is the key to learning at the secondary level.
   - The secondary reading program is an integral part of a K-12 reading program.
   - Reading is not a subject, but a process used for learning in all subject areas.
   - Reading is one of the language arts and should be taught in conjunction with writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.
   - A content-area reading program is the foundation of a secondary reading program and should be a school district's first and highest priority.
   - At the secondary level students need to maintain, apply and extend the reading skills learned at the elementary level.
   - The classroom is the best place for students to develop the reading skills they need to read materials for a class, and the classroom teacher is the best person to help students to develop these skills.
   - At the secondary level it is necessary to provide for individual differences in reading ability.
   - Some students need reading help beyond that which a classroom teacher can provide.
   - The responsibility of our secondary schools is to equip students with the reading skills they will need to gain information and pleasure.

   The goals stated that:

   - Students will use reading as a means to learn.
   - Students will develop a life-long interest in reading, not only as a way to gather information, but also as a source of enjoyment.
   - All students will have opportunities to learn to read to their full capabilities.
   - Reading is thinking. Students will need to be taught higher level thinking skills in the secondary program.
   - Students will need to learn to monitor their own study skills in order to become independent, active learners.
   - Students with special reading needs will be provided with opportunities to satisfy those needs.

- Students will have the reading skills necessary for daily survival in our complex society as well as those essential to post-high school pursuits: getting and holding a job, attending a technical institute or college.
- Teachers will be given the inservice necessary to implement a content-area reading program.
- All staff of the secondary schools will understand the key role of reading in learning and assume appropriate responsibilities to help students learn through reading.

In order to achieve the stated goals, school districts will have to make decisions on the comprehensiveness of their secondary reading programs. Two basic needs should first be met:

a. Reading specialist services must be provided in the school district;
b. A school-wide content area reading program must act as the foundation of the secondary program, and its initiation, development and maintenance should be the school district's highest secondary reading priority.

Once the reading specialist services and content reading program are in place, school districts can expand their reading curriculum to meet specific needs of their students. Four related components are possible. They are enrichment reading, developmental reading, remedial reading, and recreational reading.

2. The committee also developed a questionnaire asking Wisconsin school districts to analyze their secondary reading programs with the model provided.
3. Two mailings of the questionnaire (March, September 1984) were sent to all school districts.
4. Approximately 35% of the school districts responded by completing the questionnaire and sending information about their secondary reading program.

ROLE OF THE READING SPECIALIST

The total secondary reading program is the major responsibility of a person trained as a Reading Specialist, having *Wisconsin 317* reading certification. A strong job description with an adequate time commitment and administrative support are criticial for this position. This person could be a small school district's K-12 reading specialist, the Director of Reading in a larger school district, or a reading specialist charged with overseeing the school's reading program. The duties of this person should include the following:

- Develop and implement a secondary reading curriculum that gives highest priority to a content reading program.
- Act as a resource person to classroom teachers by aiding them in development of reading activities for their classroom.

- Work with administrators to gain their support for the total secondary reading program.
- Conduct an annual evaluation of the seconary reading program components when resources and needs dictate.
- Initiate, implement and coordinate related secondary reading program components when resources and needs dictate.
- Work closely with school district support staff on reading program concerns.
- Provide an ongoing inservice training program.
- Provide reading diagnostic services and testing information to administration and staff.

RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you have a K-12 Reading Specialist or Reading Coordinator?
   90% of the respondents stated YES.
2. Does this person hold a State of Wisconsin Reading 317 Certification?
   89% of the respondents stated YES.
3. Is this person employed full time in the school district?
   60% of the respondents stated YES.
4. What percentage of time is this person employed on K-12 reading responsibilities?
   The range of time different K-12 reading specialists spend on the K-12 program was between 5% and 90%.

   Approximately 45% of the time was the average amount spent on the K-12 program.

   An analysis of survey indicated that most of the K-12 coordinators had other district responsibilities that included teaching reading classes.
5. Does the K-12 coordinator have a job description that includes duties at the secondary level?
   60% of the respondents stated YES.
6. Besides the K-12 coordinator, do you have any other reading personnel at the secondary level.
   60% of the respondents stated YES.
7. What are the major responsibilities of secondary reading personnel in your school district?
   Most respondents stated their major responsibility was teaching in a teaching in a reading related area. This included:
   - Teaching developmental, remedial or enrichment course
   - Teaching English classes
   - Being responsible for Chapter I programs
   - Being a resource to teachers
   - Supervising a reading lab or a tutoring program.
   - Coordinating the testing program (both diagnostic and school wide)
8. Do you have a 7-12 reading curriculum guide?
   58% of the respondents stated YES.
   (Some stated they only had a junior high curriculum guide; while another school system said the curriculum guide was contained in individual course guides)

CONTENT READING PROGRAM

This component must act as the foundation of the secondary reading program. Classroom teachers are the focal point of the program because they are the directors of learning in their classrooms. Since reading is the primary vehicle for learning, classroom content teachers must have the expertise to assess and develop classroom activities to narrow the gap between student reading ability and the skill level required to read instructional materials. In short, they must have the proper preparation through undergraduate, graduate, or inservice training to further emphasize and reinforce the basic reading skills of vocabulary, comprehension, research and study skills as they relate to their subject area content. Thus, secondary teachers have a dual responsibility when teaching content. First, they have to be able to identify the skills needed to bring meaning to a reading or learning activity. Then they have to teach the skill simultaneously with the content to obtain maximum results. By using this reading/learning strategy, greater student understanding of content will occur. In addition, reading instruction at the secondary level will also take place each day, and reading/learning skills will be mutually reinforced across all subject areas.

RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you presently have a content reading program in your secondary schools?
   49% of the respondents stated YES.
2. Are plans being made to implement such a program?
   16% of the respondents stated YES.

   Thus 65% responded that they presently have or are planning to have a secondary content reading program.
3. What percentage of your content teachers have reading training either through undergraduate or graduate coursework?
   50% of school districts responding stated that 10% or less of their secondary staff had reading methodology training.

   75% of school districts responding stated that 25% or less of their secondary staff had reading methodology training.
4. Has your school district conducted inservice training in reading?
   51% stated their school district had provided some kind of inservice for their secondary staff.

   Many varied workshops and inservices have been given by school districts. Generally, many were given by the district reading specialists as part of their job responsibility. Others were given through the use of Title IV C monies such as *V.R.P. (Vocational Reading Power) Reading in the Content Areas* and E.C.O.S. Many were given by outside speakers dealing with how reading can be incorporated into the content areas. Some were done by encouraging teachers to take university classes in reading methodology.
5. Do you have a resource teacher employed to aid content teachers in implementing reading skills for their classes?
   45% of respondents stated that their school district had a reading resource teacher at the secondary level to aid content teachers; however, the percentage of the school day in which reading resource teachers could act as a resource varied from as little as 1% to a full 100%.

ENRICHMENT READING

These programs build on basic reading skills and are designed for average to above average students who probably will go on to further schooling. This program would be voluntary with the major focus on the mechanics of acquiring advanced reading/study skills. Possible units of study for this component include: college entrance exam preparation, college study skills, reading rate, vocabulary improvement, reading research skills, and thinking/problem-solving skills.

RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Does your school district provide any reading enrichment courses at the secondary level?
   48% of the respondents stated YES.
2. If yes, please give name of course or courses.
   - Composition
   - Critical Reading
   - Advanced Reading
   - Advanced Reading and Writing for the College Bound
   - Power Reading
   - Effective Reading
   - Literature Courses (American, World Mythology and Nobel Prize)
   - Accelerated Reading
   - Individualized Reading for Enjoyment
   - Reading the Novel
   - Speed Reading
   - Junior Great Books
   - College Study Skills
   - Communications

DEVELOPMENTAL READING

This program would be offered to every student at a specific grade level or as an elective and would build upon and reinforce skills needed for content learning. The general areas of instruction could range from an individualized skills management system to hetrogeneous grouping for instruction. The general topics covered could be vocabulary, comprehension and study strategies, using both narrative and expository reading materials.

RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

Does your school district presently have any developmental reading courses at the secondary level?

47% of respondents stated YES.

Many questionnaires stated that the developmental component was part of the English curriculum. Also the developmental component in the majority of school districts stopped after the middle or junior high school level.

REMEDIAL READING

Remedial programs are designed for students who need reading

help that goes beyond that which a classroom teacher can provide. These students include 1) slow learners who require a continuation of skill development in all areas of reading in order to maintain a minimal level of reading deficits but are able to improve. Programming for the first group of students can be accomplished through a modified program in which attention is given to all reading skills at a pace and level that is challenging but not frustrating to these students. The setting for this help is remedial reading. Classroom programming for the second group provides individgal diagnosis and instruction in the area(s) of deficit. This may occur in a reading laboratory. If a district is committed to competency testing in reading, help will be needed to bring students to the level at which they can pass the test. Reading classes must be taught by a certified reading teacher. Help may include special resources such as student tutors, aides and computers. The program and content, however, should act as a reinforcement to what is learned in the different content classrooms.

RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you presently have a remedial reading program in your secondary school?
   61% of the respondents stated YES. Many of these programs are Chapter I programs.
2. Do you have a tutorial program either through student or volunteer assistance for remedial students?
   34% of the respondents stated YES.

RECREATIONAL READING

This program allows students and staff to read for enjoyment at the designated time during the school day. The goal is to have students gain a greater apprecation of reading so that it can become a life-long habit and value. (Best results for making this program succeed is to have a daily time block built into the schedule.) An example would be to have a 20 minute uninterrupted silent reading period Monday through Friday from 9:10 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. All teaching staff and students would read during this time with the teacher being the reading role model for the students.

RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Does your school district have a recreational reading program at the secondary level?
   51% of the respondents stated YES.
2. Is time built into the school day schedule so that the program is continuous (daily) and consistent?
   41% of the respondents stated YES.
3. Do all students, staff and clerical members read at time provided?
   26% of the respondents stated YES.

ARTICLES TOO GOOD TO MISS: AN ANNOTATED GUIDE OF READERSHIP CHOICES

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Remember all of those past issues of the *Journal of Reading* you've been meaning to read, re-read, or carefully go through to find articles which you can use as handouts? Well, here's an annotated guide to the best articles from 1981 to 1983 in Volumes 25 and 26 of the *Journal of Reading*.

According to your colleagues -- content experts, classroom teachers, reading supervisors, administrators and college professors -- these articles are just too good to miss. In a recent qualitative review of the *Journal of Reading* by a subcommittee of IRA's Publications Committee, readers were asked to identify high quality articles. Various readership groups (classroom teachers, supervisors/administrators, college professors) agreed with content experts (IRA members with special expertise in adult literacy, comprehension, teacher education, testing, nonprint media, and multicultural education) approximately 70 percent of the time. Figure 1 lists the experts' top choices and shows how their choices either corresponded or failed to correspond with those of other readership groups. The 22 articles listed represent 14 percent of all articles published in the *Journal of Reading* during the period of the review. If, as Kuhn (1970) has suggested in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, good ideas survive, then time, the permanency of print, and this annotated guide are clearly of on-going interest and self-interest to the informed professional.

Crafton, L.K. (1983). Learning from reading: What happens when students generate their own background information? *Journal of Reading, 26,* (7), 586-592.

Realizing that reading is a particularly powerful way to develop background information for subsequent reading, Crafton investigated the impact of reading a first, related article on reading a second article. Eleventh graders were given two texts on the same topic while control subjects read unrelated texts. Though students read the first passage silently, they were asked to stop at preselected points in the second passage to talk about their reading and thinking. Students also produced retellings after the tasks were completed.

Crafton summarized her findings in the following manner:

When compared to the control group, the experimental group consisently focused on larger segments of text as they were reading. They generated more in-

Figure 1
High Quality Articles in *Journal of Reading*:
Readership Choices

Article	Experts	Sup/Adm	Tcher	Col Prf
Crafton, L.K. (1983)	X			X
Gambrell, L.B., Cleland C.J. (1982)	X	X		
Guthrie, J.T., Seifert, M. (1983)	X			
Hayes, D.A., Diehl, W. (1982)	X			
Irwin, P.A., Mitchell, J.N. (1983)	X			
Langer, J.A. (1982)	X		X	
McGeehon, M.B. (1982)	X		X	
McPhail, I.P. (1981)	X			
Moore, D.W., Readence, J.E. (1983)	X	X		
Neuman, S.B., Prowda, P. (1982)	X	X		
Readence, J.E., Moore, D.W. (1983)	X			
Readence, J.E., Moore, D.W., Moore, S.A. (1982)	X			
Singer, H. (1983)	X	X	X	X
Smith, F.R., Feathers, K.M. (1983)	X			
Smith, S.L. (1982)	X			X
Stansell, J.C., DeFord, D.E. (1981)	X			X
Stevens, K.C. (1982)	X			X
Stotsky, S. (1982)	X	X	X	X
Thelen, J. (1982)	X	X		
Vacca, J.L. (1983)	X	X		
Vaughan, J.L., Jr. (1982)	X			
Wilson, C.R., Hammill, C. (1982)				

ferences, brought in more outside information and related it to text-based information, and became more personally involved in the reading. Their retellings were clearly different in both content and organization. The experimental group produced retellings which were consistently better organized, lengthier, and more often focused on higher level text information. (p. 589)

Crafton suggests that:

...using reading as support for reading creates an instructional environment in which students become more and more skilled in dealing with content text material as their familiarity with those texts expands. (p. 592)

Gambrell, L.B., & Cleland, C.J. (1982). Minimum competency testing: Guidelines for functional reading programs. *Journal of Reading, 25* (4), 342-344.

The advent of minimum competency testing programs has placed increased emphasis on functional reading. Often, however, instructional programs in functional reading are more expedient than sound. The following seven guidelines are presented for achieving more effective programs:

1. The varying rates of learners should be accommodated. Teachers should be prepared to present the same material repeatedly if necessary and to recognize varying degrees of motivation.

2. Individual assessment using tasks that resemble reading in real-life situations should be added to the group achievement testing currently included in most programs.
3. The match between teaching and application should be close. Instruction needs to focus on reading demands placed on students in their everyday lives.
4. Age-appropriate problem-solving situations need to be included.
5. Instruction in functional reading skills should be continuous rather than geared specifically to the time immediately before the minimum competency test.
6. Teachers should share functional reading resources on a teacher-to-teacher and grade-to-grade basis.
7. Schools shogld encourage parents to teach functional reading skills in the home.

Guthrie, J.T., & Seifert, M. (1983). Profiles of reading activity in a community. ***Journal of Reading, 26,*** **(6), 498-508.**

Guthrie and Seifert sought:

...to examine the roles of reading in a community by describing the reading activities of indivudal and demographic subgroups... (p. 499)

The results of their study suggest that:

...the median amount of time spent reading per day by wage earners was 157.5 minutes, which is about 2.6 hours daily. Men read a median of 114 minutes, whereas women read about 186 minutes. Educational level accounted for a substantial difference in median reading time as individuals with education beyond high school read 217 mintues per day, whereas those with high school or less read 98 minutes per day.

At the outset of the study it was expected that reading would play different roles for individuals in different occupational groups, and the time devoted to content areas would vary by occupation.

This expectation was supported. Occupation 1, the professional and managerial group, is noted for its heavy reading of brief documents; 103.5 minutes per day was the median. Individuals in Occupation 2, which contained semi-professional, small business, and clerical workers, had a different reading pattern. Brief documents was the highest single category with a median of 50.5 minutes per day, but the mean was 113 with a standard error of 18.8. This difference between the mean and median indicates that some people read many brief documents while others in this occupational group read very few. For Occupation 3, skilled craft workers, the highest median was news and business with 20.2 minutes per day. Occupation 4 contained unskilled workers and the unemployed. Their highest volume was brief documents, with a median of 14.5 minutes per day. (pp. 504-505)

After speculating on the implications of the preferences of the group as a whole (brief documents followed by news and business, social issues and references), the authors suggest that:

...instruction takes place in several contexts. The classroom is the primary setting, but the classroom is in a community. Learning about the impacts of these contexts is likely to assist with the improvement of reading education. (p. 508)

Hayes, D.A., & Diehl, W. (1982). What research on prose comprehension suggests for college skills instruction. ***Journal of Reading, 25*** **(7), 656-661.**

As they currently operate, most college skills programs ... fail to ensure that students apply new thinking strategies to their reading tasks. If students do not make these applications, the programs will serve no valid purpose. This problem

can be remedied if teachers use their knowledge of the reading and studying processes of proficient learners to create learning experiences which develop the same processes in basic skills students. Guided by sound principles of instruction firmly grounded in prose learning research, college skills programs can be reformed to provide instruction that capitalizes on students' strengths, fosters their sense of responsibility for self-improvement, and promotes independent learning. (p. 660)

This suggests that students should be provided opportunities to discover how they learn, and should be shown a wide range of strategies and techniques that they can synthesize and modify for their own learning needs. The stress is on the process, not on the rote techniques of learning. (p. 659)

Materials should be relevant to the demands of students' college reading. As much as possible, these programs should incorporate the students' own textbooks, or text selections similar to the ones that they will encounter later. (p. 659)

Finally, learning is best accomplished when students discover personal meaning in the information and experiences to which they are exposed. Verbal learning research repeatedly indicates that information is memorable if it is personally meaningful (Ausubel, 1968). Students must realize this and must accept the responsibility for making even the driest text personally meaningful. Basic skills programs can help by demonstrating the importance of this principle and by providing techniques for making material meaningful. (p. 660)

Irwin, P.A., & Mitchell, J.N. (1983). A procedure for assessing the richness of retellings. *Journal of Reading, 26,* **(5), 391-396.**

What characteristics of a retelling distinguish different levels of understanding of the text? Which retellings are superior -- those in which the reader restates the passage content in accurate, precise detail or those in which the reader makes in-depth generalizations about life as s/he summarizes the text content? (p. 391)

Current methods of evaluating retellings have not clarified this matter to any extent. What appears to be needed are systems for evaluating retellings which incorporate the balance among aspects of the text and the effect of the whole. To gain these advantages, we developed and tested a holistic approach for evaluating student retellings. (pp. 391-392)

To judge retellings on a holistic basis, we developed a set of criteria which include many features contained in other retelling scoring schemes. However, these criteria were not to be used to assign points but rather to identify characteristics of five distinct levels of richness. A checklist was developed as a means of catergorizing the principal qualities of each level of richness in comparison with all other levels. (p. 394)

While this checklist for judging the richness of retellings is still in an exploratory stage, our work has resulted in three interesting observations. First, retellings can be scored holistically rather than in terms of point accumulation reflecting value of their isolating parts. Second, this type of checklist can be used in evaluating retellings of both expository and narrative materials. Third, it is possible for teachers to use this system, provided that they have an opportunity to participate in group sessions, using the criteria for rating and examining samples of previously scored retellings. (p. 395)

Langer, J. (1982). From theory to practice: A prereading plan. *Journal of Reading, 25,* **(2), 151-156.**

This article presents an instructional strategy which helps teachers identify what students already know with respect to a given text selection and make appropriate instructional decisions. Langer sets her instructional strategy in a theoretical frame. The critical difference between this strategy and others is that it is based on an "understanding of how knowlege is stored in memory, how it is retrieved, and

how it is used to facilitate reading comprehension." (p. 153)

PReP, as this prereading strategy is called, is intended to be used before assigned reading. To prepare for the lesson, the teacher selects a key word or phrase from the text to be read. Then, the strategy proceeds with the following steps:

1. **Initial associations with the concept.** The teacher starts the lesson by saying, "Tell me anything that comes to mind when..." Students tell their associations to the stimulus word and the teacher jots these responses on the board.
2. **Reflections on initial associations.** During the second phase the teacher asks, "What made you think of...?" This phase helps students develop awareness of their network of associations.
3. **Reformulation of knowledge.** In this final stage the teacher says, "Based on our discussion and before we read the text, have you any new ideas about...?" Responses to this phase include the elaborated prior knowledge that has resulted from previous steps.

Langer argues that PReP as an instructional strategy:

...permits a link between text concepts and past experiences and sets up, in the mind of the learner, appropriate expectations about the language and content of the text. (p. 156)

McGeehon, M.B. (1982). Strategies for improving textbook comprehension. *Journal of Reading, 25,* (7), 676-679.

McGeehon describes a reading course for potential high school dropouts which emphasized thinking skills and showed students how to improve textbook comprehension and performance on standardized tests.

The curriculum used was organized by units which focused on different aspects of textbook reading. These were entitled: (1) developing thinking skills, (2) developing reading skills, and (3) transferring skills to textbooks.

During the thinking skills segment, students studied antonyms, analogies, and did problem-solving exercises. Students were taught to apply the thinking processes involved in these lessons to reading.

During the reading skills segment, students worked independently on reading skills and used self-directing work progress forms to structure their activity.

The third segment focused on how writing in textbooks is organized. Students studied and marked the following patterns: cause/effect, compare/contrast, context clues, sequence, signal words and main idea. Marked textbook pages were read and discussed; then students applied these patterns to longer segments of text.

The comparison of pre-post test reading comprehension scores on the California Achievement Test for the 22 students involved in this curriculum showed an average gain of 2.4 years.

McPhail, I.P. (1981). Why teach test wiseness? *Journal of Reading, 25* (1), 32-38.

McPhail gives two critical reasons for teaching test wiseness:

Reason 1: To improve the validity of test results... [T]here are flaws in the construction of test items... [and researchers] have demonstrated that these flaws reduce the validity of test scores and make test items easier.

There are, clearly, two ways to avoid bias against students who have not learned to respond successfully to item-writing faults (secondary cues). The first is to construct test items that are free from secondary cues. The second is to teach all students a cue-using strategy in order to equalize this knowledge among all groups. (p. 33)

Reason 2: To provide equal... opportunity for minorities. Most minority students score lower on achievement and aptitude tests than the population at large. Informal data, together with the limited empirical data on teaching test wiseness to minority students, suggest that these students can be taught to be test wise and can improve their performance as a result. (pp. 35-36)

While McPhail acknowledges that "test wiseness has only a negligible relationship to a student's cognitive ability," he argues that "...the sort of analysis required by some activities used to teach test wiseness seems likely to strengthen students' critical thinking." (p. 36)

He distinguishes "two ways of learning test wiseness: associative learning and problem-solving" (p. 36), and outlines a problem-solving approach called a "Test Making Activity." The assumption underlying this program "is that anyone who can build a faulty item can also recognize one." (p. 37)

McPhail concludes that test wiseness "is important both for the individual whose life is influenced by the testing and for educators who want test results to be as valid as possible." (p. 37)

Moore, D.W. & Readence, J.E. (1983). Approaches to content area reading instruction. *Journal of Reading, 26,* **(5), 397-402.**

Moore and Readance report that they:

...find four basic approaches to teaching content area reading that are general enough to encompass primary grade as well as college level instruction... (p. 397)

The four approaches are identified as:

1. **Presenting isolated skills**

   This method attempts to be content free. A specific set of skills...is identified and taught regardless of which learning tasks are currently confronting students in their texts.

   The intent...is to teach for transfer...

   The major drawback is thmt students require help in transferring skills from one setting to another, and they often see little purpose in learning strategies divorced from content. (pp. 397-398)

2. **Aiming at content**

   In this method teachers focus students on learning the text's information, giving scant attention to information acquisition skills...Purposes are set prior to reading; discussion to see whether students met them follows...

   ...Controversy centers on whether aiming students toward content actually provides the skills. (p. 398)

3. **Guiding toward content**

   In this approach teachers first specify what knowledge they want acquired, and then they identify the necessary skills for learning it. A study guide is designed to lead students directly to desired text information; it also is meant to increase reading-learning abilities by modeling for students the process necessary to gather the appropriate information.

   However, students...who use study guides regularly risk becoming dependent on others to help them learn from text. (p. 398)

4. **Presenting content and skills concurrently**

   The products of learning - the subject matter facts and generalizations -- are stressed alongside the processes of learning -- the skills to acquire facts and generalizations. (p. 399)

The authors offer three effective procedures for providing concurrent content and skills instruction:

(1) *Simulating* consists of giving students certain rules for learning from text... (2) *Debriefing* entails introspection, hindsight and self-reports... (3) *Fading* happens when teachers first present students clear guidance in studying text but then gradually diminish guidance until students assume responsibility for their own learning. (pp. 399-400)

The authors conclude by suggesting that there is no research to suggest which approach is best and suggest that:

Teachers should examine the types of content area reading instruction... to determine which approach offers the most promise with regard to the resources available to them and the outcomes that are expected. With one or more of these approaches as a model, content area reading instruction can at least occur systematically... (pp. 399-400)

Neuman, S.B., & Prowda, P. (1982). Television viewing and reading achievement. *Journal of Reading, 25* **(7), 666-670.**

Using data from a statewide assessment in reading, the authors analyzed patterns of reading achievement and related them to data on televsion viewing for 7,500 students in grades 4, 8, and 11. The authors reported an inverse relationship between grade level and amount of time spent viewing television. Over 53 percent of the fourth graders were reported as being heavy television viewers (more than 4 hours a day), compared with 40 percent and 18 percent of the eighth and eleventh graders, respectively. Other correlations were calculated to reflect relationships between reading performance, reading for pleasure, and television viewing. Low reading test scores were associated with other statewide assessments of television viewing and reading achievement.

Readence, J.E. & Moore, D.W. (1983). Why questions? A historical perspective on standardized reading comprehension tests. *Journal of Reading, 26,* **(4), 306-313.**

Using a historical perspective, this article describes and criticizes three major types of reading comprehension tests: reproducing a passage, solving written puzzles, and answering questions.

Reproducing a passage involved students in writing verbatim retellings after reading. Comprehension was measured by exact recall; in fact, inferences or synonyms were discounted. Early researchers found that these tests were not only time consuming and subjective, but also invalid as measures of whether the passage had been understood.

Solving written puzzles required learners to engage in particular kinds of reasoning as they attempted to solve verbal problems. This measure was criticized because it measured only a narrow band of comprehending behavior and because the puzzles did not represent normal reading situations.

Answering questions about a series of short paragraphs became the third major kind of comprehension test format. Initially students wrote out answers to questions; later, multiple choice formats were developed. This format, with its ease in grading and claims to objectivity, became the prototype for current standardized tests of reading comprehension. Criticisms of this format include the possibility that questions may not be passage dependent, and that they ask for information which readers would otherwise disregard.

The authors assert:

Choosing best answers to questions is just one indicator of reading comprehension; students also show understanding of what they read through means such as

retelling passages, dramatizing stories, producing miscues, discussing passages, following directions, and supplying words which are thought to be the ones purposely deleted. (p. 307)

Readence, J.E., Moore, D.W., & Moore, S.A. (1982). Kohlberg in the classroom: Responding to literature. ***Journal of Reading, 26,*** **(2), 104-108.**

Readence, Moore and Moore suggest that Kohlberg's stages of moral development be used as a framework for discussing and analyzing literature. The authors note that such an approach helps students "generate insightful reading." (p. 104) It stimulates independent analysis and response as well as:

...allows readers to generate their own questions...to... monitor a character's moral development throughout the passage...instead of going back and reviewing...in response to an unexpected teacher imposed task...can be repeated...with various materials... and is simple enough to use with middle and high school students. (p. 108)

The authors introduce a three-step instructional plan: (1) introduce Kohlberg's stages using examples from the students' daily experiences; (2) read short passages and discuss the characters' moral decisions in terms of Kohlberg's stages; and (3) use small group discussions to enable students to independently apply this technique to other passages. The authors emphasize that all reasonable responses should be explored and clarified so that students are "free to explore the moral reasoning that underlies the character's actions." (p. 108)

Singer, H. (1983). A century of landmarks in reading and learning from text at the high school level: Research, theories, and instructional strategies. ***Journal of Reading, 26,*** **(4), 332-342.**

In this article, Singer looks at the "landmarks" in reading and learning from text over the past 100 years. Singer says that:

The research can be divided into three major sections: psychological processes (including a progression from perception to cognition), theories of reading that integrate previous research, and instructional strategies. (p. 333)

Singer begins his review of landmark research with Javal's study (1879), which:

showed that in reading the eyes move across the printed page in jumps, which he called *saccades*... The implication for speed reading is not to get the eyes to move faster (because eye movement time is a negligible part of total reading time), but instead to try to reduce the amount of fixation time. (p. 333)

Singer ends with Brown's (1981) research, which:

demonstrated that teaching students summarization strategies, such as deleting nonessential information, listing topics under a main concept, and identifying or constructing topic sentences, enhanced elementary children's recall of important information.

All the strategies for learning from text can be arrayed in a sequence that progresses from single to multiple text. Teachers can use this sequence to meet the wide range of individual differences in reading achievement. (p. 340)

Singer concludes his essay:

Although considerable knowledge on the psychology of reading and on strategies for teaching comprehension has accumulated over the past century, teachers still need to know more about teaching comprehension. Fortunately, we have a multitude of hypotheses available, but they need to be validated at the classroom level. When that occurs, they can join the repertoire of strategies available to teachers, who recognize that students have to learn how to learn from

texts in each content area and that it is their job to teach them how to do so. (p. 340)

Smith, F.R., & Feathers, K.M. (1983). Teacher and student perceptions of content area reading. *Journal of Reading, 26,* **(4), 348-354.**

Since a major portion of information in content area classrooms is provided in written sources, many reading educators are concerned that reading instruction in such classrooms be improved. Smith and Feathers report a study which observed social studies classrooms over an extended period of time in order to determine the role which reading plays. The articles present information on teacher-stated goals and objectives and on the role of reading in the classroom.

Smith and Feathers conclude:

It is interesting that the teachers in these classes did not view themselves as primary sources while their students viewed them not only as primary sources, but in many cases, as more important than the text. Films and supplementary materials generally were not identified by students as important or frequent sources of information even though they were often part of the instruction observed. (p. 353)

With little reading assigned and the text viewed as a less important source of information than the teacher, it seems that textbook reading is much less significant in social studies than many might assume.

These interviews with teachers and students suggested that reading may not be an important component of teaching or learning in content courses, certainly not as central an activity as those who express concern about content area reading assume. In the classes investigated, little reading was assigned; when reading was required, it tended to be an in-class assignment, with homework being that portion of the assignment not completed in class; students did not view the text as the most important source of information; and class activities did not typically integrate with the outside reading reported by students.

In addition, in these classes student perceptions of the goals and expectations for learning differed from those expressed by teachers. Students, for the most part, perceived a focus on factual learning while teachers emphasized citizenship training and higher cognitive objectives. (p. 353)

Since students' perceptions of expected learning are so closely related to their behavior and learning, teachers need to design their daily instruction to reflect stated objectives. Furthermore, the answer to improved reading in content classes may not be as simple as merely focusing on improved instruction. We need to expand the role of reading in these classes. (p. 354)

Smith, S.L. (1982). Learning strategies of mature college learners. *Journal of Reading, 26,* **(1), 5-12.**

Smith asked teaching assistants in the Learning Skills Center to "conduct an introspective study of one's own behaviors while dealing with a difficult text for which one has little or no knowledge background." (p. 5)

The assistants' introspective accounts were then analyzed and the results synthesized. On the basis of this analysis, Smith concludes:

Learning entails time, risk, and change. It requires suspension of judgment, tolerance of ambiguity, self-communication, and constant revision of ideas.

Learning is a problem solving activity, and should be taught as such. (p. 11)

Given these insights into how proficient readers learn from texts, Smith offers some suggestions for how to design reading programs which help students gain control of their own learning:

Deal with "w. le" texts (for example, entire chapters or articles) as the primary units of study. In this way, the developing learner will confront density, complexity, frustration, the effects of time, and usually the need for using other resources in learning.

Emphasize synthesis of information from different sources.

Model complex learning activities for students.

Discuss affective strategies such as guided imagery, self-coaching, concentration monitoring, and incubation as possible components of the study process, particularly when a task is difficult and likely to arouse negative emotions. Develop awarenes of study as a series of decisions by which one defines and solves problems.

Encourage students to develop their own alternative texts, choosing their own format (summaries, outlines, diagrams, study questions with answers, etc.) and selecting content useful to their purposes.

Teach the nature of general categories of study behaviors, such as those suggested in this study, but not as a sequenced system of formula. Encourage students to change tasks while studying, to keep on the move. (p. 11)

Stansell, J.C., & DeFord, D.E. (1981). When is a reading problem not a reading problem? *Journal of Reading, 25,* **(1), 14-20.**

Subject area teachers can do a great deal to enhance their students' reading within a given area by providing them with the necessary conceptual support for comprehension. An understanding of the reading process and factors which affect encounters with print will allow content area teachers to support effective reading and still focus on their content areas. (p. 14)

Within this framework, Stansell and DeFord note:

(a) Reading and comprehension involve an active interaction between the author and the reader.
(b) Interference in comprehension may be due to a lack of conceptual or experimental background, a mismatch in language between author and reader, or a overreliance on any one of the cuing systems in language.
(c) Comprehension may be limited by the text. If the text is poorly written; styistically, syntactically, or conceptually complex; or characterized by technical or unfamiliar terminology, the reader may need additional support for reading.
(d) Readers' understanding of the work and expectations generated by past reading strongly affect their perceptions of materials and events. They use what is known in organizing what is new. (p. 18)

The authors suggest that:

Since readers must have some knowledge to bring to the printed page in order to comprehend it, there are limits as to what may be learned from print. Therefore, reliance upon the textbook as the sole medium of learning cannot result in success.

They advise that the texts serve as a summary of instructional activities, which may include films, tapes, field trips , experiments, demonstrations, games, simulations, and class discussions. (p. 18)

They also encourage suplementary print sources and instruction in effective learning strategies.

The authors further suggest that:

Readers must be actively involved in reading, and avoid passively mouthing the author's message word by word. Readers who believe they must read every word are not going to be as effective as those who actively use their knowledge to support the sampling-predicting-confirming process. (p. 19)

Stansell and DeFord suggest that teachers provide instruction which facilitates involvement in the reading process such as having students note and discuss miscues and share problem-solving strategies which they used during the reading of a particular text.

The authors close by noting that:

By focusing on teaching strategies which develop students' conceptual grasp of a given subject, content area teachers will provide the support needed for effective reading in their classes. (p. 20)

Stevens, K.C. (1982). Can we improve reading by teaching background information? ***Journal of Reading, 25,*** **(4), 326-329.**

This study investigated whether direct teaching of background knowledge concerning a topic would have beneficial results when students read passages concerning that topic. Tenth grade boys were assigned to one of two treatments. The experimental treatment received instruction concerning the background of the target passage; the control group received non-relevant instruction. When students were tested after reading the targeted passage, the effect of the treatment was statistically significant. The researcher concluded that:

...providing background information on the topic resulted in improved reading of that topic, even when reading ability was factored out in the analysis. (p. 328)

Stotsky, S. (1982). The role of writing in developmental reading. ***Journal of Reading, 25,*** **(4), 330-340.**

Many composition teachers have long sensed that the development of writing skills enhances the development of reading skills. (p. 330)

By requiring students to respond in writing to words and ideas that they are asked to recall, reproduce, restate, select from, generalize, reorganize, integrate, or elaborate upon, we may be providing them with the most active comprehension practice possible. (p. 339)

To this end Stotsky discusses research related to several writing activities for possible consideration by reading teachers - dictation, reporoduction, paraphrase writing, precis writing, sentence combining, sentence pattern practice, and copying.

She concludes:

It is worth noting that in all these writing exercises the student never moves beyond literal understanding of the text. Literal understanding is very much the concern of the teacher of informational and argumentative prose. A growing number of students need help in understanding the informational and argumentative materials they must read in order to acquire the knowledge base that is indispensable for independent and original thinking. Thus, exercises that give students structured, active practice in grappling literally with the language and ideas of these forms of discourse may be particularly useful for the secondary or post-secondary reading teachers. (p. 339)

Thelen, J. (1982). Preparing students for content reading assignments. ***Journal of Reading, 25,*** **(6), 544-549.**

Content area teachers have often expressed concern over the fact that although

students can "read" their textbooks, they just don't understand what they "read." (p. 544)

Thelen outlines a seven-step instructional program which integrates the technique of structured overview with the theory of concept attainment. She cites research which suggests that both good and poor comprehenders benefit from such instruction. The seven-step program includes:

(1) developing a hierarchy,
(2) defining the concept,
(3) asking students to contribute examples,
(4) adding the examples to the hierarchy,
(5) guiding the students in discovering characteristics common to all examples,
(6) guiding the students in finding the differences, and
(7) asking students to discriminate new examples supplied by the instructor.

Thelen concludes:

The model enables the teacher to ascertain what the learners already know and to teach them accordingly, using both receptive and discovery learning techniques. When provided with sufficient background concerning the new material, the student should find the textbook easier to comprehend. (p. 548)

Vacca, J.L. (1983). How to be an effective staff developer for content teachers. ***Journal of Reading, 26*** **(4), 293-296.**

Vacca reports on an extensive study intended to develop evaluation criteria for staff developers. Using the Critical Incident Technique, 500 teachers were asked about their perception of effective and ineffective staff development sessions. Vacca notes that:

Teachers want to be involved in staff development sessions in which their time is not wasted. They prefer ideas, strategies, and materials that relate directly to their own classrooms. These should be presented or demonstrated by someone who is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and who respects participants' experiences. (p. 296)

She includes a list of:

critical aspects of specific ways in which leaders should implement staff development:

Content delivery
Uses active involvement techniques such as role playing.
Avoids straight lecture method.
Maintains balance between group participation and presentation of information.
Demonstrates ideas and strategies with classroom examples.

Personal influence
Is enthusiastic and interested in the topic.
Is dynamic and stimulates excitement.
Relates to group in open, honest, friendly way.
Answers questions patiently.
Respects participants as peers.
Possesses a sense of humor.

Professional competence
Is knowledgeable about the topic.
Has clear objectives in mind.
Is well-organized.
Keeps on schedule.
Explains procedures and gives directions for all activities.
Adheres to the topic.

Uses audiovisual materials with skill.
Allows time for questions.

Arrangements

Assesses needs of group in advance of presentation.
Uses seating arrangements appropriate for group size and type of activity.
Attends to comfort of group through room temperature.
Gives breaks as needed.
Adjusts noise levels as needed.
Schedules sessions at time other than immediately after school if possible. (p. 296)

Vaughan, J.L., Jr. (1982). Use the ConStruct procedure to foster active reading and learning. *Journal of Reading, 25,* **(5), 412-422.**

The ConStruct Procedure involves students in active concept structuring through a series of successive readings of the same passage. Each reading is focused on a different function: first, a survey reading of the selection to obtmin an overview; second, a careful study-type reading to develop understanding; and third, a reexamination of sections not understood. During each of these steps, the learner develops and refines a graphic overview of the concepts and relationships involved. Finally, the reader skims the entire selection and reviews the graphic overview in order to reinforce his or her understanding.

According to its author, the ConStruct Procedure "helps readers become more active in their search for meaning in complex, extended, expository text." (p. 422)

Wilson, C.R., & Hammill, C. (1982). Inferencing and comprehension in ninth graders reading geography textbooks. *Journal of Reading, 25,* **(5), 424-428.**

In order to examine thinking processes during comprehension and focus particularly on inferencing, these authors asked ninth grade students to read a selection in their geography textbook. The passage was marked at each clause boundary and students were instructed to read and paraphrase each clause.

The paraphrases of these good, average, and poor readers were then analyzed to determine if differences in thinking processes were revealed, and if they were related to reader proficiency levels. The data indicated that good readers drew more inferences and that poor readers produced more incorrect responses. The authors concluded that lack of background knowledge and concepts was reflected in the incorrect responses of the poor readers.

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INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION ADOPTS CENSORSHIP STATEMENT

The Board of Directors of the International Reading Association adopted the following statement about censorship at their January meeting. The statement was developed by IRA's Intellectual Freedom Committee, chaired by Dr. M. Jerry Weiss of Jersey City State College.

"The International Reading Association supports freedom of speech, thought and inquiry as guaranteed in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. Censorship infringes upon that freedom by denying individuals the right to select what they read and by limiting access to alternative points of view. Free inquiry is necessary to a democratic society.

"In the spirit of freedom, members of the International Reading Association are committed to advancing reading comprehension and literacy at all ages and stages. Reading comprehension must go beyond literal understanding, to interpretation and evaluation of what is read. The First Amendment makes this critical perspective possible by permitting the publication of materials which represent diverse points of view. Helping students to develop this critical perspective, however, requires an enlightened educational program with curricula that provide for:

1. freedom to choose from a rich choice of classroom and library materials dealing objectively with many facets of a diverse society;
2. freedom to discuss issues identified by such reading; and
3. freedom to defend collective and individual positions against challenges from groups and individuals with different points of view.

"IRA supports the rights of parents to monitor the materials that their children are required to read, and IRA believes that no student should be forced to read material which he or she finds morally offensive. IRA further believes, however, that formal channels should be established for handling criticisms of school materials, and that parents and others should use these channels when filing a complaint.

"Many communities and institutions have found that the best defense against censorship comes from developing procedures for dealing with challenges before challenges actually occur. The use of standard procedures for text selection is essential for answering challenges of materials and for maintaining the right of students to select what they read. Such standard procedures should set forth policies for book selection in academic libraries and classrooms.

"The determination of normal operating procedures for text selection should include development of the following:

1. There should be policies for the selection of printed materials. These policies should be developed with input from community groups, including teachers, students, parents and civic leaders. Policies must be written and approved by appropriate governing bodies (boards of directors, trustees, etc.)
2. There should be written guidelines for identifying and handling complaints.
3. There should be a system for openly communicating with civic, religious, educational and political bodies in the community.
4. There should be systematic methods for disseminating positive information about intellectual freedom through newspapers, radio and television.

"Members of the International Reading Association must determine whether guidelines and procedures for selecting materials and answering challenges exist in their agencies and schools. If such guidelines do not exist, members should push for their adoption. These guidelines and procedures allow the school system to respond in a careful, considered manner to challenges against materials used in the schools. This can provide insurance against incidents which may inflame a community and endanger academic freedom."

Further information on censorship is available from the following organizations, whose resources set forth guidelines for developing tools and procedures to use in text selection and evaluation:

American Association of School Administrators
1801 North Moore Street
Arlington, Virginia 22209

American Civil Liberties Union
22 East 40th Street
New York, New York 10016

The American Library Association
Intellectual Freedom Committee
50 East Huron Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Suite 1100
1701 K Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

The National Coalition Against Censorship
132 West 43rd Street
New York, New York 10036

National Council of Teachers of English
1111 Kenyon Road
Urbana, Illinois 61801

The International Reading Association is a non-profit education organization devoted to the improvement of reading instruction and promotion of the lifetime reading habit among people worldwide.

METACOMPREHENSION § Eric Digest

Teachers make many instructional decisions based on their assessments of student comprehension. "Excellent" students, for example, are often given enrichment materials, so that they won't be bored while the teacher works with other students; "poor" students, on the other hand, are often given remedial materials to help them "catch up." Almost always, such decisions are based on what a student knows or doesn't know relative to the teacher's questions. Although assessment of a student's comprehension is necessary and important, it is not always sufficient. There is another dimension that teachers might consider: the student's metacomprehension, or awareness of his or her own understanding.

What is Metacomprehension?

Who of us has not had the experience of reading a book and becoming aware that we have not understood the content of the last few pages? At the point of that awareness, our metacomprehension was very high -- we *knew* we hadn't processed anything we'd just read. On the other hand, while we were reading absentmindedly, our metacomprehension was very low --we had been unaware of our own level of understanding. Metacomprehension, then, is the awareness of and conscious control over one's own understanding or lack of it.

Regardless of whether or not students are "doing well" (by whatever grading scheme we use), they may or may not be aware of their own degree of understanding. Students with high metacomprehension are either those who know they understand when, in fact, they do, or those who know they do not understand when, in fact, they do not. their awareness of their understanding accurately reflects their comprehension.

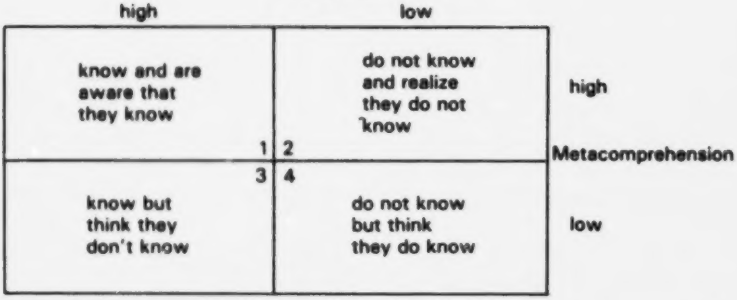
Students have inaccurate or low metacomprehension if they are uncertain, or itf they are unaware, that they do or do not understand. Pool metacomprehension may be exhibited in different ways: there are students who are sure they just "blew" tests on which they subsequently get top scores, students who believe that they have the material "down pat" and perform poorly, and students who just haven't thought about their own state of understanding. When we put these comprehension/metacomprehension dimensions together, we can divide our students into four groups (Figure 1).

Why Is Metacomprehension Important?

One of the primary goals of instruction is to help students become efficient and effective learners -- to have them become responsible for their own learning. Effective learning requires

Figure 1

Comprehension



From *Computers in the English Classroom: A Primer for Teachers.* Sally N. Standiford, Kathleen Jaycox, and Anne Auten. Urbana, Ill.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and National Council of Teachers of English, 1983, 17. ED 228 654.

awareness of one's understanding or lack of it, as well as knowing what to do when one fails to understand. Baker and Brown (ED 195 932) have identified three main reasons for comprehension failures: (1) the learner does not have enough information about the topic to interpret the message (written or oral); (2) the learner has the appropriate schemata, or prior knowledge, but there aren't enough clues in the message to suggest them to the learner; or (3) the learner interprets the message consistently, but the interpretation is different from the one intended by the author or speaker. It is very unlikely that students in the third group will take remedial action, since they won't realize that their comprehension has failed. Students who fail to construct consistent interpretations are more likely to attempt activities to clarify their understanding. "Such self-awareness is a prerequisite for self-regulation, the ability to orchestrate, monitor, and check one's own cognitive activities," according to Brown, Campione, and Day (ED 203 297, 26).

What Can English/Language Arts Teachers Do?

Asserting that sophisticated reading is a complex, acquired skill, Stewart and Tei (37) state that readers need to learn how to engage in certain activities to achieve the goals of reading. One such goal, for example, is reading to study. This may involve skills such as recognizing and retaining main points, rereading important sections, making adjustments in reading rate, and self-testing to monitor the success of various stategic activities. Awareness of the understanding and use of these skills is necessary to metacomprehension.

Schallert and Kleiman (ED 172 189) have identified some strategies reading teachers can use to help students' metacomprehension: (1) focusing the student's attention on the main ideas; (2) asking students questions about their understanding to help them monitor their comprehension; and (3) relating the student's relevant prior knowledge to the new information. As teachers we need to teach students how to use such activities and encourage their independent use.

For students with low comprehension -- high metacomprehension (Cell 2 of grid), teacher questions and feedback designed to help students apply appropriate studying strategies and techniques can be effective. These students do not gain from those teacher responses that simply indicate that they are wrong -- they already know that. As teachers better understand these strategies and techniques, they can train students to use them more effectively. For example, instructing students to summarize a reading without giving them any criteria for development of a summary does a disservice to those students who are aware that they don't know how to construct such a summary.

Students with high comprehension -- low metacomprehension (Cell 3) need consistent, positive reinforcement, both verbal and written. Although some research has demonstrated that the positive reinforcement of confirming correctness for some students is ineffective, regular positive reinforcement is effective for this subset of students, since their lack of confidence is critical.

The approach for students with low comprehension -- low metacomprehension (Cell 4) should be to focus on the metacomprehension dimension first, breaking through their false sense of understanding rather than teaching them content. One might ask these students questions that help them recognize a contradiction between what they really know and what they *think* they know, but don't. For example, a student who draws an illogical inference from a reading passage due to incomplete background knowledge may be unconvinced if simply told that he or she is wrong. Such a student could be confronted with his or her misunderstanding by being shown similarities and/or differences between the passage in question and analogous material more familiar to the student.

How Can Teachers Evaluate Student Metacomprehension?

One of the simplest ways to assess a student's awareness of understanding is to ask the student to rate the certainty that he or she has answered correctly or incorrectly. Students with good metacomprehension will respond that they are relatively certain that their correct answers are correct or that their incorrect answers are incorrect. Poor metacomprehenders will have a

mismatch between their answers and their confidence ratings. A word of caution: younger students frequently respond positively when questioned on how sure they are of what they know, regardless of the truth of their assertions (Baker and Brown 1980). More direct evidence of metacomprehension for these students might come from monitoring the self-correction of their errors during such learning activities as reading.

"The ability to reflect on one's own activities... is a late developing skill with important implications... If... the child is not aware of his own limitations as a learner or the complexity of the task at hand, then he can hardly be expected to take preventive actions in order to anticipate or recover from problems" (Baker and Brown ED 195 932, 3). It is not enough for a teacher to be aware of the dimension of comprehension awareness. Development of the student's own awareness is crucial. To better serve their students, English language arts teachers should regularly and actively integrate metacomprehension strategies in their classrooms.

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Sources for Further Reading

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WHICH STUDY TECHNIQUES ARE MOST EFFECTIVE IN PROMOTING RETENTION OF INFORMATION?

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Most of the common study techniques, such as underlining, note-taking, and outlining are used because teachers and students believe that these methods will help the student learn and remember required information. All of these study methods require varying degrees of active intervention on the part of the learner in order to promote the retention of information over a period of time.

The *Journal of Reading* has published several articles dealing with techniques and considerations for teaching outlining, note-taking, and underlining. Articles dealing with these topics are as follows:

Palmatier, Robert A. Comparison of four note-taking procedures. ***Journal of Reading,*** **1971,** ***14,*** **235.**

The four note-taking methods examined were: a) the traditional Formal Outline Procedure (FOP); b) a three-column method described by Walter Paul (1962) of Cornell University (PCU); c) a two-column method developed over several student generations at the University of Michigan and Syracuse University, known as the *Bartush Active Method (BAM);* and d) a No-special-Method Control (NMC), allowing students to take notes as they wished. The methods were chosen as representative of the various procedures advised by how-to-study writers over the past seventy years.

Thomas, Keith J. and Cummings, Charles K. The efficacy of listening guides: Some preliminary findings with tenth and eleventh graders. ***Journal of Reading,*** **1978,** ***21,*** **705.**

Jotting notes onto a teacher-prepared listening guide during lectures helped high school students. Best results showed up on essay tests.

Mallett, W. Graham. Organizing reading for learning. ***Journal of Reading,*** **1978,** ***22,*** **103.**

The author suggests a device to help students organize material for later learning or for written reports. It is called the ORL (Organized Reading for Learning).

Heinsell, T. Stevenson. Stepping up to outlining. ***Journal of Reading,*** **1978,** ***22,*** **248.**

An array is a free-form outline which requires a student to decide how to arrange key words and phrases to show how the author fits his ideas together into a meaningful pattern. It uses

words, lines and arrows as its symbols.

Wright Kelly, Brenda and Holmes, Janis. The guided lecture procedure. *Journal of Reading,* **1979, *22,* 602.**

This note-taking and teaching strategy helps students think during the lecture and assimilate the material in a synthesized form via small group and written recapitulation.

Berrent, Howard I. OH RATS - A note-taking technique. *Journal of Reading,* **1984, *27,* 548.**

This article outlines a note-taking procedure which the writer says helps students retain information. The steps involved are Overview, Headings, Read, Answer, and Test-Study. By using this technique, the student learns to anticipate what he may read, question it, read for answers, and write down important points while comparing this to what he thought he would find in the text.

McAndrew, Donald A. Underlining and note-taking: some suggestions from research. *Journal of Reading,* **1983, *27,* 103.**

Research results pertaining to underlining and note-taking are presented along with suggested variations of these devices, cautions, and considerations in using them.

Discussion

In terms of research, how effective are these techniques, and is one superior to the others in promoting the retention of information?

Underlining is a very popular aid in textbook study probably because it is easy to do and takes very little time. Studies indicate that the major benefit of underlining occurs when the student generates the underlining rather than using text with supplied underlining. The facilitative effect, it is assumed, is generated through the amount of processing required to make the decision about what to underline. However, this approach is no more effective than other study techniques (Pearson, p. 666).

Note-taking permits the student to record a reworded version of the ideas presented in a text. Most research on note-taking indicates that it, too, is no more effective than other study techniques. However, note-taking, as related to prose, can be an effective strategy if it requires focusing of attention and processing of information in a like manner to the demands of the criterion task, the manner and form through which the learning will be measured. When not effective, it may be due to an inappropriate focus of attention, processing information unrelated to the demands of the criterion task, or failing to take notes that are elicited through processing (Pearson, p. 670).

Outlining, in comparison to the previously mentioned techniques, tends to require deeper processing in order to produce a representation of the meaning and logical relationships of the text (Pearson, p. 670).

In conclusion, Pearson states that,

> Almost any technique *can* be effective if its use is accompanied by focused attention and encoding in a form and manner appropriate to the criterion task. However, some techniques have more potential than others for promoting the deeper processing suited to criterion tasks requiring greater comprehension and/or recall. These techniques include outlining... Techniques that are likely to yield the highest learning benefits also have the greatest costs in student time and energy (p. 674).

Reference

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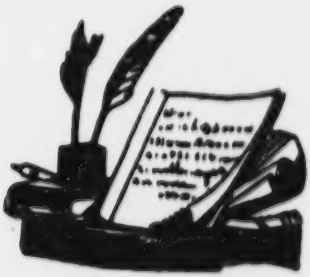

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Volume 29, Number 3	Theme: **Content Area Reading**
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